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THE WHITE HOUSE

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WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE - EYES ONLY November 30, 1962

GUIDELINES FOR THE PLANNING OF CUBAN OVERFLIGHTS

NSC Declassification/Release Instructions on File

This memorandum indicates the kinds of information the United States Government now needs to obtain with respect to the situation in Cuba, from the point of view of overall policy.

1. The United States Government has a high priority need for the following:

a. Continuing evidence on the removal of offensive weapons systems from Cuba.

b. Evidence of any reintroduction of offensive weapons systems into Cuba.

c. Evidence of the concealment of offensive weapons systems in Cuba.

In meeting these requirements, it should be understood that the objective is to have timely warning of any substantial change in the situation. It is not essential that every cargo be examined and every rumor traced by low-level photography. What the Government needs is information which will protect it in good time against any new threat of offensive weapons in militarily significant numbers.

2. The United States has a priority need for continuing and reliable information with respect to the general order of magnitude and deployment of Soviet military units and installations in Cuba. There is not at present a requirement for immediate tactical information, nor should Cuba be regarded as an open target for the procurement of military intelligence on Soviet forces which is of general interest to the intelligence community. Our object is rather to have adequate continuing information on the Soviet military presence in Cuba as a major element in the political situation in the Caribbean.

3. The United States Government has a need for continued information on the general situation in Cuba -- political, military, and economic -- but it is assumed that overflight contributions to this end will be by-products of missions undertaken in fulfillment of the needs in paragraphs 1 and 2 above.

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4. The United States Government is prepared to use both low-level and high-level reconnaissance, but it is desired that where practicable necessary intelligence be obtained by a regular schedule of high-level flights, with low-level missions called for on the basis of specific indications of a target of special interest. The Executive Committee would like to have an estimate of the adequacy of such a system of intelligence collection to meet the criteria set forth above, on the assumption that it is supplemented by energetic collection of information by all other available means.

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